Qalandars, Zalmi and Gladiators renew PSL franchise rights for next decade

LAHORE: Pakistan Super League (PSL) outfits Lahore Qalandars, Peshawar Zalmi and Quetta Gladiators renewed their franchise rights for another 10 years on Monday, the country's cricket board.

The agreements, finalised at market valuations determined by global audit firm Ernst & Young after what the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) described as a "comprehensive and transparent assessment", come ahead of the league's expansion to eight teams from its 11th edition next year.

Lahore Qalandars — the PSL's most valuable franchise and winners of three of the last four editions under Pakistan ODI captain Shaheen Shah Afridi — were among the first to extend their rights.

"It gives me immense pleasure that Lahore Qalandars will continue to stay with its current owners," PCB chairman Mohsin Naqvi said in a statement. "[Qalandars owners] Atif Rana and Sameen Rana have worked extremely hard to turn this franchise into a household name across Pakistan and a reputable brand around the world."

Peshawar Zalmi, one of the league's most recognisable brands and champions in 2017, also renewed their decade-long rights on Monday. Led by owner Javed Afridi, the franchise has cultivated one of the strongest fan bases in the league and was the most-watched team during the last PSL season, said the PCB.

Mohsin lauded Javed's "commitment, professionalism and passion", saying his leadership had "played a fundamental role in elevating the Zalmi brand into one of the most dynamic and admired sporting entities in Pakistan".

"Javed Afridi's vision has contributed immensely to the growth of the HBL PSL," he added. "His decision to renew reflects a strong belief in the league's future potential."—Agencies

Arshad, Yasir return home after medal triumphs in Riyadh

LAHORE: Pakistan's leading javelin throwers, Olympian Arshad Nadeem and emerging contender Yasir Sultan, returned home on Monday after winning gold and silver medals, respectively, at the Islamic Solidarity Games in Riyadh.

Arshad, who made history at the Paris 2024 Olympics by setting a new Games record with a throw of over 92 metres, secured gold in Riyadh with an effort of 83.05 metres. Yasir, a bronze medallist at last year's Asian Athletics Championships in South Korea, produced a personal-best 76.04 metres to clinch silver — his first-ever medal of that colour at international level.

Speaking to reporters at the airport, Arshad said the victory carried special significance as it came after a period of injury and rehabilitation.

"It is not easy to compete after recovering from injury. I am grateful to God, my coach Salman Butt, the Pakistan Olympic Association, the Pakistan Sports Board and all Pakistanis," he said.

Arshad, who missed a podium finish at the last World Athletics Championships due to injury, said he was now focused on the busy 2026 international calendar.

"Gold is gold, distance does not always define the achievement. In the 2012 Olympics, the gold was won at 84 metres, so I am satisfied with my performance in Riyadh," he added.

He also highlighted the importance of employment opportunities for athletes, noting that his career "truly began" after he joined Wapda/Lesco on a sports quota in 2015.

Yasir said winning silver at a major international event was the biggest milestone of his career so far.

"My throw was not the best, but it earned me silver and that is what matters," he said.

He acknowledged feeling pressure while competing alongside Arshad but said his senior's encouragement helped him settle.

Yasir pointed out several challenges, including the lack of international-standard javelins and the absence of a coach on tour.

"I usually borrow Arshad's javelin during international events," he said, adding that his coach had to guide him online during the competition.

A large number of fans and athletics officials gathered at Lahore airport to welcome the medal-winning athletes.—Sports Reporter

GUWAHATI: South Africa's Marco Jansen bowls during the second Test against India at the Barsapara Cricket Stadium on Monday.—AFP

Jansen takes six as SA close on historic Test series win

GUWAHATI: Towering pace spearhead Marco Jansen took six wickets to put South Africa in sight of a first Test series win in India in 25 years after bundling out the hosts for 201 in the second match on Monday.

Replying to South Africa's 489, India were 288 behind in their first innings but the tourists did not enforce the follow-on and decided to bat again on day three in Guwahati.

After winning the first Test in the two-match series in Kolkata, South Africa are closing on a first series win in India since Hansie Cronje's team triumphed in 2000.

India are under massive pressure once more, having suffered their fourth defeat in six Tests at home in the first match.

A dominant South Africa reached 26-0 at stumps to extend their lead to 314 in the second innings.

Left-handed Ryan Rickelton, on 13, and Aiden Markram, on 12, were batting when bad light ended the day's play in the northeastern city, where the sun sets early.

Jansen, a left-arm quick, claimed his fourth five-wicket Test haul before wrapping up the Indian innings with his sixth strike of the day in the final session to return figures of 6-48.

Scoreboard

SOUTH AFRICA (1st Innings) 489 (S. Muthusamy 109, M. Jansen 93; K. Yadav 4-115)

INDIA (1st Innings, overnight 9-0):

Y. Jaiswal c Jansen b Harmer	58
K.L. Rahul c Markram b Maharaj	22
S. Sudharsan c Rickelton b Harmer	15
D. Jurel c Maharaj b Jansen	0
R. Pant c Verreynne b Jansen	7
R. Jadeja c Markram b Jansen	6
N. K. Reddy c Markram b Jansen	10
W. Sundar c Markram b Harmer	48
K. Yadav c Markram b Jansen	19
J. Bumrah c Verreynne b Jansen	5
M. Siraj not out	2
EXTRAS (LB-8, NB-1)	9
TOTAL (all out, 83.5 overs)	201

FALL OF WICKETS: 1-65 (Rahul), 2-95 (Jaiswal), 3-96 (Sudharsan), 4-102 (Jurel), 5-105 (Pant), 6-119 (Reddy), 7-122 (Jadeja), 8-194 (Sundar), 9-194 (Yadav)

BOWLING: Jansen 19.5-5-48-6, Mulder 10-5-14-0 (1nb), Maharaj 15-1-39-1, Harmer 27-6-64-3, Markram 10-1-26-0, Muthusamy 2-0-2-0

SOUTH AFRICA (2nd Innings):

R. Rickelton not out	13
A. Markram not out	12
EXTRA (B-1)	1
TOTAL (for no wicket, eight overs)	26

BOWLING: Bumrah 3-0-13-0, Siraj 3-1-8-0, Jadeja 1-0-2-0, Yadav 1-0-2-0

SHELL-SHOCKED INDIA

Washington Sundar, who made 48, and fellow left-hander Kuldeep Yadav resisted in a partnership of 72 off 208 balls before off-spinner Simon Harmer struck to end Sundar's defiance.

Jansen then dismissed Kuldeep for 19 off 134 balls and Jasprit Bumrah for five to pack a shell-shocked India off in under three sessions.

"There is quite a few ways you can play the game and it's up to the individuals on what their plans are," said Sundar. "We just back our plans but at times it doesn't go our way."

On the pitch, Sundar said, "It's a true wicket and not many days you get to bat on such tracks, especially in India. If you spend time there runs are for the taking."

Earlier, the left-handed Jaiswal lost overnight partner KL Rahul for 22 in the first hour of play before reaching his 13th Test half-century.

Jaiswal used the sweep to good effect and took on the bowlers, hitting seven fours and one six until his departure off Harmer.

Harmer had Sai Sudharsan caught at mid-wicket for 15 and Jansen removed Dhruv Jurel for a duck to further put India on the back foot at the first break.

The 6ft 8ins (2.03 metres) tall Jansen, who made 93 in South Africa's imposing first-innings total, used the bouncer to snare the Indian batters with Jurel falling to the pull off a short ball.

Skipper Rishabh Pant fell caught behind for seven to Jansen soon after in the second session and the batting fell apart like nine pins.

Aiden Markram took a stunning catch as he ran from second slip to take a one-handed diving catch to his right to dismiss Nitish Kumar Reddy off Jansen. Reddy made 10. —AFP

LONDON: Chelsea players attend a training session at the club's training ground on Monday. Chelsea host Barcelona on Tuesday. Blues manager Enzo Maresca said on Monday that star player Cole Palmer will miss the clash against the Spanish giants. In Tuesday's other matches, another Premier League side Manchester City will host Bayer Leverkusen while high-flying Villarreal travel to Broussia Dortmund. Italian champions Napoli will host minnows Qarabag FK of Azerbaijan and Newcastle United lock horns with Olympique de Marseille.—AFP

Eman to lead Pakistan U-19 women in BD T20 series

KARACHI: All-rounder Eman Naseer will lead Pakistan's under-19 women's side in a five-match T20 series against Bangladesh, scheduled from Dec 3 to 12 at the Cox's Bazar Academy Ground, the Pakistan Cricket Board (PCB) announced on Monday.

According to the PCB, The series forms part of both boards' plans to deepen their pathways structure and provide broader exposure to emerging cricketers in the lead-up to the third ICC Women's U-19 World Cup, slated for January 2027.

The 15-member squad includes eight players who featured in the tournament's 2025 edition in Malaysia — Aleesa Mukhtiar, Areesha Ansari, Komal Khan, Mahnoor Zeb, Memoona Khalid, Ravail Farhan, Shahar Bano and Zoofishan Ayyaz. Their inclusion, the PCB said, is aimed at building continuity and experience within the group.

Among the newcomers are left-handed batter Raahima Syed, all-rounder Aqsa Habib, left-arm pacer Ayesha Riaz and right-arm pacer Barirah Saif. Skipper Eman, a leg-spinner and right-handed batter, is one of the more experienced players in the youth set-up.

The side has been preparing at a two-week training camp at the Hanif Mohammad High Performance Centre here, following a busy domestic calendar that featured the National Women's U-19 T20 Tournament in September and an extended fitness and skills programme in October. 20 players were shortlisted for the pre-tour camp before the final squad was selected. The team departs for Bangladesh on Nov 29.

Squad: Eman Naseer (captain), Aleesa Mukhtiar, Aqsa Habib, Areesha Ansari, Ayesha Riaz, Barirah Saif, Fizza Fiaz, Komal Khan (wicket-keeper), Mahnoor Zeb, Memoona Khalid, Raahima Syed, Ravail Farhan, Rozina Akram, Shahar Bano, Zoofishan Ayyaz; Non-travelling reserves: Alzoha Hammad, Maria, Nasreen Ashraf, Zainab Khanum—Agencies

Australia hopeful of Cummins return in Brisbane

PERTH: Australia coach Andrew McDonald is hopeful skipper Pat Cummins will be able to play in the second Ashes Test and thinks it highly unlikely that quick Josh Hazlewood will miss the whole series.

Paceman Cummins on Saturday rated himself a "half chance" to play the day-nighter against England in Brisbane from December 4 but McDonald was a little more positive than that when he spoke to reporters on Monday in Perth.

The coach said the 32-year-old had been scheduled to turn his arm in the nets on day four of the Perth Test on Monday but Australia's stunning victory inside two days had forced him to put those plans back by a day.

"That hasn't eventuated the way that we would have liked for Patty," McDonald said. "Once we see him there again, we'll be able to then join the dots as to what [a return] potentially looks like. It will be a genuine discussion leading into this test match and that may be one that eventuates late for us. A little bit to work through but it's nearing completion, which is really, really positive."

Hazlewood, another member of the three-man pace cartel that has served Australia for a decade, suffered a hamstring injury that ruled him out of the first Test.

"He's working through first week of his rehab," said McDonald. "Once he gets further down the track, then we'll be in a position to communicate. He'll be available at some point in the series."

The third member of the trio, Mitchell Starc, stepped up with match figures of 10 for 113 in the first Test, a match dominated by pace bowling until Travis Head's spectacular 123 won the day for the home side.

McDonald said opener Usman Khawaja, who suffered back spasms in Perth that prevented him from coming out at the top of the order for the second innings, had returned home for checks but was not guaranteed to start in Brisbane even if he was fit.

"It's a long way out, a lot of information to gather between now and then, and hopefully Usman is fit and available for selection," he said. "I think anytime you spasm, it's a result of something going on in your back. So I think that further investigation is just due diligence around that."

Head scored his match-winning century as a second-innings opener in his place and McDonald suggested it was a role the South Australian might reprise in future matches.

"I think it gave us a little bit of a lens potentially to the future in terms of adjusting batting orders in second innings," he said. "You do it in one-day cricket, you front-end some of your innings if you know the back end is going to be difficult to chase down the runs.

"It's a conversation that we have had. We've had a conversation around Travis opening the batting for a long period of time, and Trav has been on the record this week around that also."

Pink ball Tests, particularly the evening sessions, are often dominated by pace bowling but McDonald said spinner Nathan Lyon would not be lightly discarded for the Gabba.

"It's not something that we like doing," the coach said. "If you look at Australian pink ball cricket in general terms, the middle sessions have been quite benign, and Nathan's done a lot of work there."

'KEEP THE FAITH'

McDonald's counterpart Brendon McCullum, meanwhile, urged England fans to "keep the faith" and said there would be no change in approach after their humiliating capitulation in the first Test as their cavalier attacking game, dubbed "Bazball" after the coach's nickname, backfired.

Batting collapses coupled with Head's sensational 69-ball century condemned England to yet another defeat in Australia.

Since last claiming an Ashes series in Australia 15 years ago, England have now lost 14 Tests, drawn two and won none in Australia, and were savaged back home following the defeat.

"Keep the faith," the New Zealander McCullum said, asked by reporters what his message would be to England fans.

"Sometimes we get beaten and it looks pretty ugly, but there are times when having that type of mentality allows us to still believe in our abilities when we step out to play.

"There are times we don't get it right, but we have to believe in what we believe in because it gives us the best chance. Just because we are one down in the series doesn't change what we believe in. We have to stay calm, stay together, and plot our way back into this series, as we have done before."

Meanwhile, the England Cricket Board said on Monday that Jacob Bethell, Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue — who did not feature in Perth — had been picked to play a day-night warmup match against the Australian Prime Minister's XI in Canberra.

"The England Men's Ashes Test squad have released three players Jacob Bethell, Matthew Potts and Josh Tongue to join the England Lions for their forthcoming two-day fixture against the Australian Prime Minister's XI in Canberra," ECB said in a statement.

The match will be a day-night fixture, played with the pink ball, starting on Saturday.

Australia head into the Brisbane Test with momentum and an imposing record in day-night matches, having won 13 of their 14 Tests played under lights, including all three against England.—Agencies

Pakistan down Kyrgyz Republic in U-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers

BISHKEK: Pakistan impressed again in the AFC U-17 Asian Cup Qualifiers beating Kyrgyz Republic 3-1 on Monday.

Pakistan had the brighter start and got the opening goal in the ninth minute in a fortuitous manner after Kyrgyz Republic custodian Daniel Kuluev let Mohammad Mustafa's shot escape his clutches and land in the net.

At the other end, Samar Razzaq produced a brilliant reflex save to push Ulukbek Ishenbaev's strike from close range onto the bar.

The national youth side benefited from another defensive error from the group hosts in the 23rd minute, Kuluev rushed out of his box to head clear but the ball landed nicely for Abdul Samad who volleyed into the empty goalmouth.

Razzaq was the saviour for Pakistan again in the 65th minute, tipping Aliiar Alisherov's cross-cum=shot on to the post.

Kyrgyz Republic pulled a goal back in the 65th minute after Artem Potorochin's strong challenge saw the ball roll nicely for Ishenbaev to lift past Razzaq.

Pakistan rode the heavy pressure before a breakaway goal in the 83rd minute sealed their win, M0hammad Abdullah found Muhammad Essa who thumped his shot high into the roof of the net.—Agencies

Williamson returns for West Indies Tests

WELLINGTON: Kane Williamson was included in the New Zealand squad for December's three-Test series against West Indies on Monday along with experienced seamer Blair Tickner and young gun Zak Foulkes.

Former captain Williamson — New Zealand's record Test run scorer —has retired from international Twenty20 cricket and skipped the One-day International series against the West Indies which concluded on Saturday with a 3-0 sweep for the Black Caps.

"Kane's ability on the field speaks for itself and it will be great to have his skills as well as his leadership back in the test group," coach Rob Walter said of the 35-year-old batter. "He's had a bit of time off to get himself ready for red-ball cricket."

All-rounder Daryl Mitchell, eighth on the ICC Test batting rankings, also returns after missing the last two ODI matches with a groin strain he picked up while scoring a century in the series opener.

Seamers Will O'Rourke and Ben Sears were unavailable due to injury and Kyle Jamieson will miss the series opener at least, offering Tickner an opportunity to win his fourth Test cap more than two years after his third.

Tickner, 32, was twice named Man of the Match in the ODI series against England in late October and early November. Jacob Duffy, 31, was included as another pace option.

Foulkes, 23, took a nine-wicket haul when he and Duffy made their Test debuts against Zimbabwe in Bulawayo in August.

West Indies have recalled veteran paceman Kemar Roach to their squad for the series, which kicks off in Christchurch on December 2. The series moves on to Wellington on December 10 with the final Test at Mount Maunganui on December 18.

Squad: Tom Latham (captain), Tom Blundell, Michael Bracewell, Devon Conway, Jacob Duffy, Zak Foulkes, Matt Henry, Daryl Mitchell, Rachin Ravindra, Mitchell Santner, Nathan Smith, Blair Tickner, Kane Williamson, Will Young .—Agencies